

Policy Checklist for LEAs

These components should be considered and incorporated into an *LEA Policy for Cell Phones*:

Why? Clear Policy Objectives

- Define the specific goals of the policy, such as student safety, staff support, preventing distractions, improving academic focus, and responsible technology use.
- Example: Encouraging kids to focus on only school during the day is an essential part in making up the education gaps in test scores, attendance, and social skills we are seeing because of the pandemic.

Learning Environment/Permitted Uses

- Outline policy for limiting and/or structuring student cell phone usage including when and where students are allowed to use phones.
- Provide behavior expectations for cell phones and devices to students and families and specify prohibited activities such as texting, social media, and disruptive behavior.
- Define use and non-use areas within the classroom, school, and on school grounds.
- Outline what devices are included, for example, cell phones, tablets, smart watches, etc.
- Example: Students may use personal technology devices during lunch, school-sponsored activities outside of school hours, for educational purposes with explicit teacher permission, or in the event of an emergency as defined by this policy. Students may not use personal technology devices to engage in disruptive behavior or cyberbullying.

Accommodations

- Review and ensure that accommodations for students with disabilities that have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 are met.

Safety & Emergency Use

- Define parameters for emergencies, including how to contact a student while in school.
- Teach about the safe use of cell phones and smart devices during emergencies.

Cell Phone Storage/Technology Support

- Where will students keep their phones? For example, designated stations, lockers, classroom cubbies, or magnetic bags
- Manage wireless to limit access to certain websites or content on school grounds

Discipline/Appeals Process

- If a student violates this policy, a teacher or administrator shall take the following disciplinary measures, including confiscation of the cell phone and/or a call to parent/guardian.
- Provide a fair and transparent process for students or parents/guardians to appeal disciplinary actions
- Example: The first violation of this policy will result in the student receiving a warning and potential device confiscation. The second violation will result in detention or loss of privileges. The third offense will result in suspension or other disciplinary action, as appropriate. Students may appeal disciplinary actions by submitting a written request to the principal within five (5) school days of the incident.

Staff, Parent, and Student Feedback (if possible/optional)

- Hold informational sessions to address questions or concerns.

Consult with LEA attorney to ensure the policy aligns with state and federal laws, including the First Amendment and student privacy rights

Implementation

- Implement a monitoring system for cell phone use such as classroom rules, designated phone storage areas, or technology monitoring tools
- Educate staff on policy to ensure consistent enforcement
- Communicate the policy to students and their parents or guardians
- Provide information on the mental and physical health effects of high levels of cell phone and social media use to students and families.
- Reinforce digital literacy lessons, the effects of cyberbullying, privacy concerns, and online disinformation.

Review and Updates

- Review the policy annually to assess its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments